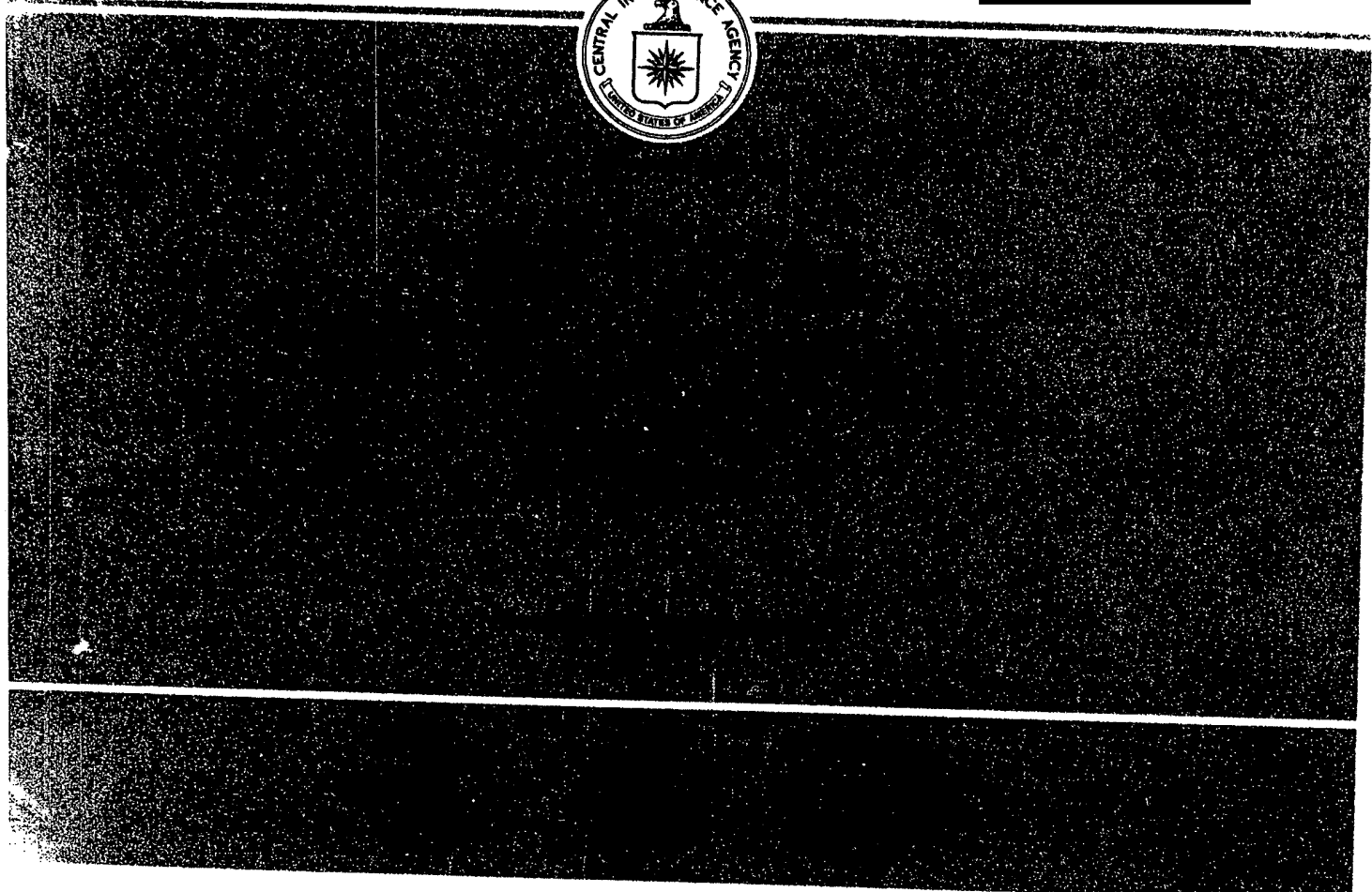


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INDIA: Muted Response to US Nuclear Certification Delay

Indian officials have been low-key in responding to the US delay in certifying that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device. Some commentators have called the lack of certification, and the legally mandated US aid cutoff that would follow, a major plus for India, but New Delhi has not made a public statement on the issue.

[REDACTED]

Comment: New Delhi has long maintained that Islamabad has a nuclear weapons program and would view a cutoff in US aid to Pakistan as irrefutable evidence. Indian officials probably have been slow to react because they are uncertain how to handle a public debate on nuclear policy, and they are preoccupied with a number of domestic problems. Some Indian politicians favor an overt nuclear program and probably would try to use any US action on certification to force a political debate on nuclear policy. Indian officials are unlikely, however, to adopt an overt weapons program even if Washington does not issue a certification.

[REDACTED]

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